Expert level talks between India and China

1584. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what progress was made during the seventh round of expert level talks held in New Delhi recently between India and China on the vexed border row and other bilateral issues including cultural, economic and functional co-operations;

(b) whether both sides decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China, if so, when and where; and

(c) when the next round of talks of the Joint Working Group (JWG) of India and China expected to be held and agreements likely to be signed?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The 7th Meeting of the India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officials (EG),which is a sub-group of the India-China Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question, was held in New Delhi on November 24, 1999. The meeting discussed boundary-related issues, including measures for confidence building. The two sides reiterated the objective of seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question through dialogue and commitment to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations. There was agreement on promoting exchanges in diverse fields, including mutually beneficial cultural, economic and functional cooperation.

(b) During my visit to China on June 14-15, 1999, and my subsequent meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister on July 25, 1999 in Singapore, the two sides agreed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations (April 1, 2000) in a befitting manner, including through exchanges in the cultural, media and academic fields.

(c) The India-China Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question (JWG) last met on April 26-27, 1999 in Beijing. Meefings of the JWG are generally held annually. The next meeting is expected to take place in New Delhi on mutually convenient dates.